

Frequently Asked Questions

What is PACFA?

The Pet Animal Care Facilities Program is a model program for states across the country and is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of those animals in pet care facilities.

PACFA gives the Colorado Department of Agriculture the statutory authority to license and inspect all pet animal care facilities. Any person who is operating a pet animal facility that engages in selling, transferring, adopting, breeding, boarding, training, grooming, sheltering or rescuing any pet animal may need to be licensed with the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Who benefits from PACFA?

The PACFA program benefits license holders by providing a clear set of guidelines for operation of pet animal facilities. The general public benefits by having the assurance there is oversight of the facilities where pet animals are raised and receive care. Pet animals benefit by receiving care in facilities that are required to adhere to a higher standard.

How often are facilities inspected?

The PACFA program is a risk based inspection program. Each new facility receives a risk assessment rating of low, medium, or high based on the type of business being conducted. Inspections are conducted every two years, every 18 months, every 12 months, or every six months according to the risk classification. The goal of the inspection is to cite violations that don't meet PACFA standards and to set a date for correction that will bring the facility into compliance.

What does PACFA regulate?

PACFA is committed to making sure that pet care facilities meet minimum standards for physical facilities; sanitation; ventilation; lighting; heating; cooling; humidity; spatial and enclosure requirements; nutrition; humane care; medical treatment; methods of operation and record keeping.

The PACFA staff works through compliance efforts, inquiry investigations, and routine inspections. The program's goal is to ensure facilities are meeting or exceeding these standards.

Who needs to license?

Retail and wholesale pet animal dealers, Pet animal boarding and/or training facilities, Pet animal handlers, Pet groomers, Animal shelters, Pet animal breeders, and Pet animal rescues.

What can someone do if they have concerns about a PACFA facility?

People are encouraged to contact the PACFA office if they would like to file an inquiry into a facility. This is a simple process and can be done by one of the following:

1. visit www.colorado.gov/ag/animals and click on "Pet Animal Care Facilities Program"
2. call (303) 239-4161
3. write to Colorado Department of Agriculture, Pet Animal Care Facilities Program, 700 Kipling St., Suite 4000, Lakewood, CO 80215

Complainants must provide a detailed description of the issue, which includes the species of the animal(s), location, name of facility, etc. If complainants wish to know the outcome of the inquiry they will need to provide their name and contact information. A PACFA inspector will investigate the inquiry to determine if there is a violation of the PACFA statute or PACFA rules and regulations. Inspectors cannot comment on the inquiry until the investigation is complete.

What happens when an inquiry is made about a facility licensed by PACFA?

Every inquiry is investigated and is of the utmost concern to the inspectors and veterinarians in CDA's pet care program. The inquiry will be assigned to an inspector who will begin an investigation, typically within five days. That investigation can include researching the facility, gathering information from veterinarian and complainants, and an on-site inspection. If violations are found during inspections, the facility is assessed penalty points, which are used in part to determine risk based inspection classification.

What is the difference between inquiries deemed to be "non-compliant," "compliant," and "not regulated?"

Those inquiries that lead to a discovery of a violation within a facility are deemed "non-compliant."

Those inquiries that don't reveal a violation of PACFA are deemed "compliant."

Those inquiries that PACFA has no authority to enforce are deemed "not regulated".

Why are there so many inquiries deemed compliant?

The rules and regulations are written to provide a reasonable minimum standard that ensures the health and well-being of the pets in the licensed facilities. A violation that may have been seen by the public previously may have been corrected before PACFA's pet care inspector arrives. There are also some inquiries made that pertain to an item not regulated by the pet care program.

How does PACFA enforce its rules?

PACFA has a number of tools they use to gain compliance including inspections, civil fines, and license suspension, denial and revocation.

What happens if a facility fails an inspection?

A follow-up inspection will occur but the date of that inspection will not be released because unannounced inspections are an important tool for the pet care program.

Within PACFA's rules and regulations, a facility that fails three consecutive inspections for an original violation may have action taken against its license.

What kind of penalties could be imposed if a second inspection is failed?

PACFA has the authority to fine a maximum of \$1,000 per violation.

How can three inspectors adequately inspect and respond to complaints in over 1,800 pet care facilities?

CDA's pet care program operates a risk-based inspection system that establishes an objective point score for each pet care facility. This system enables PACFA inspectors to inspect facilities that have a higher risk score more frequently, allowing inspectors to concentrate their time and effort on facilities that have a history of increased risk in problems with pet care.

Can the state shut a facility down?

The Colorado Department of Agriculture can shut down a facility if it is not able to meet the standards set forth in the Pet Animal Care Facility Act (PACFA). However, there is a process involved and the goal of PACFA is not to shut down a facility, but instead, PACFA's goal is to educate those facilities and bring them into compliance.